

*Immigration Act*

I believe that Canada is pursuing a selfish and exclusive immigration policy which, under the most liberal interpretation is self-destructive and internationally dangerous. For years we have found excuses for not having a long-term immigration policy. Behind those shallow excuses, whether we admit it or not, there is smugness, selfishness and narrow-mindedness. The need for sanctuary is greater now than at any previous time in history, and the nation which ignores this obligation and plea of these refugees will suffer, as all nations ultimately do, which ignore their fundamental moral responsibilities.

The Atlantic charter and the four freedoms should mean something more than a piece of paper, and yet that is all they have meant to hundreds of thousands of persons in Europe. I do not wish to be presumptuous, but I say in all sincerity to this parliament that, unless Canada takes some action on the refugee problem in the near future, unless she takes a more humane and more Christian attitude to these people in Europe in their hour of need, our negligence will go down as one of the dark spots in our history.

The condition of these displaced people, which is beyond description, pleads for them, and our country, in the interests of justice and humanity, cannot indefinitely ignore that plea.

I realize that wide-open immigration is not feasible at this time; there are difficulties in the way, such as transportation and housing. But that should not prevent this parliament from enunciating a long-term policy and doing so quickly. The programme should be a flexible one, taking into consideration from year to year the labour needs of our nation. I believe that parliament could do much worse than adopt at this session in large part the recommendations made by the senate committee last fall. Along with the hon. member for Vancouver South, I would welcome a statement from the minister or the Prime Minister as to what Canada is going to do in the future about immigration.

Mr. GLEN: On the point of order, Mr. Speaker, which I raised previously, the hon. member's speech is an illustration of the need for a ruling from the Chair. In the first part of his remarks he spoke to what is before the house, but since then he has spoken on the general policy of immigration, and particularly about refugees, with which this bill has nothing to do. Might I suggest, as Your Honour did from the Chair, that we should confine ourselves to what is contained in the bill and deal with the subject that is most under discussion, the question of Chinese immigration. Surely there is sufficient matter

[Mr. Thatcher.]

in that to content any hon. member who desires to speak on this bill. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the debate should take place within the four corners of this bill and that a general discussion of our immigration policy is wholly foreign to the bill. There is plenty of opportunity for any hon. member to express his views on immigration generally when the estimates are before the house.

Mr. MacINNIS: You are not making a ruling on this point of order, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: No point of order has been raised. I understood the minister to make a suggestion to the house.

Mr. THOMAS REID (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, in taking part in this debate, my first word is to say that I am in agreement with the speech made by the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Green). May I say to you, sir, and through you to the members, that it is my prophecy that more speakers will be heard from British Columbia in this debate than perhaps from any other province in Canada, and for the reason that we in British Columbia have been the gateway for the entry into Canada of immigrants from Asiatic countries. We have been closer to the problem than have hon. members from other provinces. As a matter of fact, the problem is entirely unknown in certain sections of Canada because they are three or four thousand miles away from it.

I wanted to give my own personal views regarding the introduction of this bill. I have always felt that a grave injustice was done the people from China when compared with others who came from Japan, and I have so stated both in the house and in public on many occasions. I could never see the reason for the government of Canada saying to those from China, "You cannot come here", and yet at one time holding pretty nearly an open door to those who came from Japan. Now the shoe is on the other foot; Japan is down, and we are taking the stand which we should have taken many years ago. I agree with the hon. member for Vancouver South when he challenges the minister and asks him, what is the government's policy? I believe that most hon. members would be in agreement with this measure, but we fear where it will lead. I noted that in his speech the minister said: "This is the first step." To me that was a very important statement indeed. What of the second or perhaps third step?

In his opening remarks the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Thatcher) came out wholeheartedly for the measure. I am wondering whether he and his party are supporting the stand which was taken by Mr. Mosher last